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THE

UNVAILING OF DIVINE JUSTICE

IN

THE GREAT REBELLION.

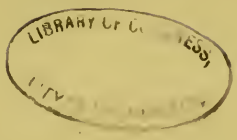
A SERMON

BY

REV. T. H. ROBINSON:

JUNE 1, 1865.

HARRISBURG:
AMBROSE TAYLOR, PRINTER.
1865.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With respects of
T.H.R.

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Lincolniana

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HARRISBURG, *June* 2, 1865.

REV. T. H. ROBINSON:

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned respectfully request, for publication, your sermon preached on the National Fast-day, June 1.

There is a great desire among those who heard it that it should be published, in order that its timely and truthful and eloquent statements, illustrations and vindications of the hand of God in the history of the war for the Union, should have a wider circulation.

Yours,

JOHN W. HALL,
D. FLEMING,
J. W. WEIR,
HENRY GILBERT,
T. L. CATHCART,
A. L. RUSSELL,
JNO. C. KUNKEL,
JNO. J. PEARSON,
CHAS. L. BAILEY.

DISCOURSE.

"Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."—Job xxxvii. 23.

I know no higher duty for times like these, than that of bringing the light of God's Word to shine upon the great events which are now commanding the attention of men. We may listen to the voices of those, who, standing in places of power, speak as the representatives of the nation. We may give ear to those journals, which, while they claim to be the organs of public opinion, do themselves create that public opinion. There remains still a duty of uttering and of hearing those truths which God has been pleased to reveal, that have a bearing upon public affairs.

Never in the history of the world has a nation been more clearly under a course of divine discipline, than this nation, during the last decade of years. The history of ancient Israel did not throb and palpitate with the conscious presence of God, any more really than does our American history. If the Most High addressed Israel in no such muttered, dark and groveling oracle as the gods of the Heathen addressed to their worshipers, so has He been speaking to us in none but the clearest and most impressive tones. If in the

centre of the world's ancient civilization, He gave an outspoken revelation of his will, a prompt answer to the prayers of his people, and vindicated a wise and just government against the barbaric violence of the Pagan nations, so again, in modern civilization, through his Word, and grandest providences, He has revealed his will; he has been the Hearer of prayer, and has vindicated a just government against the barbaric violence of treason at home, and the hate of despotism abroad. If the classic Pagans, who worshiped carved wood, and chiseled marble, and molten brass, and who contemned, in their insolent ignorance, the Hebrew as a worshiper of empty air, because his God was a Spirit, was at length compelled to confess that their forged and rival deities could not stand before the Mighty Divinity of Israel; so too, the jealous nations that have been gibing at us, as a people given up of God to our own mad passions, and to swift destruction, are at length learning that our God has been in the midst of us, ruling, immovable and serene, in the lurid tempest of calamity, that has lowered and roared around us. He has not kept himself aloof from the turmoil, but has rode royally upon the storm, and yoked the whirlwinds of carnage and of civil war to the chariot of his own predestined triumph. The storm, that has darkened all our homes and activities, has been but the dust of his feet, as in dim and shrouded majesty, He came bringing a great salvation.

As through all ancient providences, so also through all modern, do we find one and the same great principle ruling. I know not how better to express it than by words that are in themselves a contradiction; the

principle of concealment and of manifestation:—of mingled concealment and manifestation. God hides himself at the very moment when He is most marvelously present. He vails himself even in his most wonderful manifestations. "Clouds and darkness are round about him;" yet, at the very time, do we most impressively recognize the truth, that "justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne;" or, as the words of the text express it, in uttering the same truth, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

I shall not pause to show you how nature illustrates this truth of Jehovah, vailing and yet revealing himself. I see not how any one can sit down in a summer's day, with the shade of the trees around him, and the wind rustling in their leaves; how he can look upon a fair landscape of river and plain, of hill and encircling mountains, covered with their clustering forest; how he can look upon the sun going down beyond the misty hills, flinging its golden rays aslant the waters, filling up and flushing all the deeps of the mottled sky, with purple and gold; how through the gates of parting day, he can gaze upon the other worlds, that silently take their places in the heavens over him—worlds so distant, that their light has been thousands of years traveling to reach him: I see not how any one can look upon all this wondrous and beautiful scene, and not feel that there is only one word that will embrace it all: God!

Nor shall I pause to show you how, from the manger where he lay a babe, to the cross, whereon he hung, a bruised and plaintive sufferer, the Saviour was a "God

hiding himself;" yet how too, all along his career, in his discourses and in his miracles, He justified his title of "God manifest," by letting the streams of his majestic brightness and divineness break out, as through every window and loop-hole and crevice of the tabernacle, in which He walked. The mortal sunrising and sunsetting of this "Day Star from on high" was begirt with clouds; yet that birth and life and death were but a continued manifestation of the principle I have stated—the covering up and the unfolding of the Divine Majesty.

Nor need I pause to show you how, in his daily providence, God allows himself to seem to be entirely withdrawn and concealed,—to be indifferent to our highest interests,—to close his eye-lids on falsehood and wrong, onl,y that He may, by the trial and the doubt, waken in us a more loyal trust in him, as our ever-present Sovereign and Father. Through blinding tears and unlooked-for humiliations and disasters, and apparent desertions, He teaches us to walk by faith, and rest upon his unchangeable and all-sufficient nearness. In the train, often in the guise, of heaviest judgments, He sends the rarest mercies. The cloudy pillar was to ancient Israel a token of the Almighty presence and control, no less than was the pillar of fire.

Walking, among them and before them, their vanguard and their rear guard, He yet hid himself from them; nor was the sound of his stately footsteps heard in all their camps. No eye caught sight of him. God was among them, constant, watchful, bounteous; yet He vailed himself.

Let us turn rather, as we are called to do by this

appointed day of humiliation and prayer, to the history of our own nation, during the last few years, and seek illustrations of the principle which I have stated. How often, in days of adversity and darkness, have we exaggerated this trait of concealment in the Divine character; as if it were, on his part, abandonment and desertion! We can now, from our high rock of safety, look back to times when we rolled fearfully on the deep; and when, in some sudden lurch given by the ship of State, under the stress of the storm, we cried out in horror and anguish, as if the helm of the universe had swept out of the Divine Pilot's hand! What terribly anxious and doubtful days were those, when Senator after Senator left the Halls of Congress; when State after State broke the bands of union; when fort after fort, and arsenal after arsenal, were seized with traitorous hands; when timidity and cravenness reigned at the head of the nation; when of our acknowledged military leaders, scarcely one was left, save the old hero of Mexico; when our President-elect was compelled to reach the capital of the country in disguise; when by the bombardment of Sumter, the American people suddenly learned that *war* was actually begun; when a few days later, all communication with the national capital and the President of the nation, was blockaded to the North, and the country was told by the mayor of a neighboring city, whose streets were sprinkled with the blood of citizen soldiery, that no more of her defenders could pass through her precincts; and when again, shortly after, the gallant army, that left the capital with streaming banners and proud step, fled back again, in disgraceful and horrid rout, followed by shouting trai-

tors to the very doors! How well we remember the sudden paleness and shame that mantled the face of the nation; and how we looked, in that hour of our first anguish, for the Most High, on the right hand and on the left, alike in vain; how we went backward and forward, but saw no proof of his nearness or of his interest in our concerns. "Touching the Almighty, we could not find him out:" but He soon proved himself to be "Excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

Let us turn now to a survey of the great contest through which the American people have passed, and mark the development of wonderful providences. On the night of December twenty-sixth, eighteen hundred and sixty, Charleston bay witnessed the first, in that long line of stirring events, which have made it a second time famous in American history. In the historic fort of Moultrie, men were hurrying to and fro, in silent haste; gathering together all the moveable property of the fort, spiking the guns, burning gun-carriages, preparatory to a departure. It was strange work to be done in American waters, in an American fortress, and by loyal soldiery; but that little garrison was surrounded by scowling and deadly foes, and they well knew Moultrie could not hold a day against assault. Last of all the flag-staff was cut down; and then the entire garrison, numbering but little over half a hundred men, crept silently into the boats, and with muffled oars, the full moon shining in a clear sky, sped across the sleeping waters; passing under the very bows of the guardship Nina, to the securer ramparts of Sumter. When the news reached the North, already humiliated

by the message of the President of the country, in answer to an insolent demand of South Carolina, guaranteeing that the United States forces in Charleston harbor should not be reinforced, it sent a thrill through many hearts, that felt we were drifting silently toward a sea of fraternal blood. The Charleston Courier of the next day made the following announcement:—"Major Robert Anderson, U. S. A., has achieved the unenviable distinction of opening civil war between American citizens, by an act of *gross breach of faith.* He has, under counsels of a panic, deserted his post at Fort Moultrie; and under false pretexts, has transferred his garrison, and military stores and supplies to Fort Sumter."

Hear it! "A gross breach of faith!" "Deserted his post!" Southern chivalry brands the defence of the American flag, by a United States officer, sworn to defend it till death, as a "gross breach of faith!" as the "opening act of a civil war;" and the passage of the United States Government, in the person of one of her loyal sons, from one of her forts to another, across her own waters, as "desertion!" In what school of infamy were such lessons taught and learned? And the Secretary of War, a man whose honor had never been above reproach, resigned his high office, unable to "hold it longer under conviction of patriotism, nor with honor;" covering up under these specious words his fears of prosecution for robbing the Indian Trust Fund.

A few hours after Major Anderson had reached Sumter, he summoned his little force around the flagstaff, for the purpose of raising on it the banner brought from Moultrie. The chaplain offered a fervent prayer that the God of our Fathers would inspire that little

garrison to maintain the honor of their country's flag unsullied through the trials that awaited them; and as the little band responded, with a deep Amen, Major Anderson, on bended knee, and with head uncovered, drew the national emblem to the top of the staff.

> "Then the loud huzzas rung out, far and widely o'er the sea!
> They shouted for the stripes and stars, the standard of the free!
> Every eye was fixed upon it, every heart beat warm and fast,
> As with eager lips they promised to defend it to the last!"

Three months and a half of gloom and of apprehension passed by; months of grand forbearance on the part of the loyal North; months of angry preparation in the South. South Carolina, always leader in acts of disloyalty, raised a provisional army, and arrayed around Sumter a besieging force of seven thousand men. Moultrie and Castle Pinckney were strengthened, and many new batteries erected along the shores of the bay; till upon the devoted band they had concentrated a converging fire of one hundred and forty guns, many of them of very heavy calibre. All supplies were cut off. The garrison was reduced almost to the point of starvation. On the twelfth of April, eighteen hundred and sixty-one, at half past two o'clock in the morning, in answer to a demand from General Beauregard to surrender, Major Anderson replied, "I will evacuate the fort by noon of the fifteenth, should I not receive, prior to that time, controlling instructions from my government, or additional supplies." *Fifty minutes later*, such was the atrocious thirst to open the war, and to "fire the southern heart," the following note was placed in the hands of Major Anderson, by a former United States Senator:—"Sir: By authority of Briga-

dier General Beauregard, commanding the provisional forces of the Confederate States, we have the honor to notify you, that he will open the fire of his batteries on Fort Sumter, in one hour from this time." In one hour, at half-past four o'clock in the morning of April twelfth, eighteen hundred and sixty-one, the bombardment began! For four and thirty hours the balls and shells of one hundred and forty guns thundered against, or dropped within, the walls of the doomed fortress. Throughout the first day, the heroes of Sumter threw back the nation's defiance in swift and solid iron. At seven o'clock of the next day, Sumter re-opened fire, and the guns of the little patriot band again made a most gallant defence. At eight o'clock, the officers' quarters were fired by a rebel shell—at ten o'clock a shot struck down the flag—at noon most of the woodwork of the fort was burning, and suffocating flames and smoke penetrated everywhere—a little later our men ceased firing; while through driving smoke and flying cinders, they rolled out ninety barrels of gunpowder to prevent explosion; and then at last, their quarters entirely burned, the main gates of the fort destroyed by fire, the magazines surrounded by flames, four barrels and three cartridges of powder only being available, and no provisions left but pork, they accepted terms of evacuation; and on Sunday afternoon of April fourteenth, eighteen hundred and sixty-one, they marched out of the fort, with colors flying and drums beating; bearing away company and private property, and saluting their flag with fifty guns. So marched they forth, those bronzed men of war, humiliated in the

eyes of traitors—glorified in the eyes of all loyal and true men for ages to come.

Four terrible years of national agony, in which we felt, many, many times, that God was hiding himself, rolled away—Oh so slowly and heavily. They seemed to carry on them the weight of centuries. The bread of affliction was given us to eat, and the water of tears to drink. Our homes were made dark and desolate. Bereavement smote us. We lay down by tens of thousands in hospitals and dungeons and unmarked graves. The hour of compensation came. On the fourteenth of April, eighteen hundred and sixty-five, the fourth anniversary of that day when the symbol of the national authority was lowered at Sumter, a second gathering was seen within the scarred and battered walls of that old fortress. Some of the old heroes are there, emblazoned with the stars of their country's love and honor. Major Anderson, now General, is there with his pale and spiritual face. And who does not feel that there was a peculiar fitness, decorousness, an intrinsic propriety, in the order of the Chief Magistrate, that on the very spot where the national majesty was first dethroned, it should be reinstated—that there, in sight of the birth-place of the grand conspiracy, and of the grave of its chief sponsor, the hands that had reverently taken down the flag, and folded it up, and borne it away, should unfurl it again, and raise it high in air. Once again they kneel around the flag-staff of Sumter; the old chaplain in his place; magnates of the nation, and men who had become famous in war, surrounding; prayer once more, from loyal lips, re-baptizes the place; and then General Anderson, after a few modest words

of gratitude to God, that he had lived to see the day, raises to the mast of Sumter, the identical flag that had been lowered four years before; and as the tumultuous cheers of thousands die away, old Sumter speaks again; her enraptured voice thunders a salute of one hundred guns to her ancient flag; the free waters of the bay laugh in their gladness, and from Moultrie and Johnson and Putnam, and other forts and batteries, a hundred loyal guns respond; and over the conquered city a hundred loyal flags gleam! Then was Jehovah's ordinance of earthly government vindicated and glorified on the very spot where it had been insulted and humbled. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

Let us look upon another illustration. In the winter of eighteen hundred and sixty and sixty-one, men clad in the robes of our American Senate and Hall of Representatives, were traitorously plotting treason in those sacred places, and murderously lighting the torch that should lay in ashes our republican nationality. They were the representatives of three hundred thousand men, whose politics and religion were founded upon this first principle—that every man who stole or sold his brother, was a gentleman and born to rule; and that he who made his own living was not. They were the men who, for forty years, had been able to keep the government in tremors of dread; to dictate terms of fellowship by threatening disunion; who for seventy years had been setting up and pulling down parties, controlling the nation's policy, giving it its character abroad, and governing the very religion of the

land. They were the men that demanded and revoked compromises, at their own pleasure; that imprisoned our citizens, at their will; that searched our ships for dangerous passengers; and at their own whim lynched northern men. They were the men who said, "abolish free speech: it is a nuisance;" and it was done; who controlled our States, our cities, our presses, our pulpits, our politics, our very workshops, as if they were their own; and who, when they saw they were about to lose the ruling and shaping of the government, determined to sail out of it. You remember the lordly and infamous valedictories of these men, as they strode, haughty, and unharmed, though covered with treason, from our national halls—with what scorn they shook off the dust of their feet against us, and gathered their robes about them, and said they would return when the national capital should be the capital of their new empire.

You will remember, too, how that but one man from all those States was bold enough, and true enough, to lift his voice, in tones of thunder; and to pierce this opening treason with the furious flash of a patriot's eye. You will recall, how when Senator Toombs, of Georgia, uttered, on the floor of the United States Senate, the infamous sentiment, that "When traitors become numerous, treason becomes respectable," Andrew Johnson rebuked him, and declared, that whether traitors were few or many, he would wage war with them, to the bitter end: and how when they stalked out of the hall, he called to them, "If I were the President of the United States, I would seize and hang every one of you." The nation trembled in those days, when Davis

and Benjamin, and Mason and Slidell, and Breckinridge and Toombs, and their associates in guilty treason, marched from the national halls, with the safety of honest men, and the tread of conquerors. Their life-long servants and worshipers, in the North, paled and shook, as if Providence had gone forth with them. But to-day, how stands it with these men, and with that one noble man, whom a few months later they drove from his family and home, in Tennessee, with the venom of bloodhounds?

Some of them are filling traitor's graves: others are loathed and despicable wanderers in foreign lands: others are skulking in disguise amid the swamps of the South; the price of treason on their heads, and the blood of patriots on their souls; never again to enter the halls of the nation, save as prisoners to be impeached for their high crimes, before the nation's judgment bench: the arch-conspirator and ring-leader of this largest, fiercest and most tenacious rebellion known to history, caught while a panting fugitive; blotting out even the last vestige of manly honor by a humiliating disguise—now a prisoner awaiting trial: the boasted Confederacy, born of the pit, pierced through and through, cloven again and again, its forts wrested from them, its rivers and bays patrolled by our gun-boats, its legions routed, utterly overthrown, driven like chaff by the northern hurricane, overtaken, confronted, flanked, crushed—its great generals, the treacherous sons of West Point, in our hands, the Governors of its States hiding in by-places; and now at last, from end to end, and from side to side, from Manasses to the Rio Grande, not a breath of air tainted by the fluttering of

their traitorous flag: while sitting in the Chair of State, honored of God and of men, holding in his hands pardons to dispense, as he will, to humbled and penitent conspirators, Andrew Johnson, in 1861, "faithful only among the faithless." "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

Again: when we go back, to look for the public actors, upon whom rests a large share of the responsibility for this rebellion, we cannot omit another prominent class of men in the South. The revolution in public opinion was too universal and too radical to be occasioned wholly by the craft and jugglery of politicians. The deep foundations of the popular will were not broken up by the utterances of mere party platforms. The testimony of southern statesmen and southern presses clearly avows and establishes this fact, that for the inception, advocacy, progress and consequences of the great treason and rebellion, no class in the South stands to-day more responsible than do the southern ministry and the leading laymen of the southern churches. They were the teachers of the people. Before any act of separation had taken place, leading clergymen advocated, from the pulpit, the whole doctrine of secession; and called upon the people "to walk to victory through a baptism of blood." They counseled open and armed resistance if Mr. Lincoln should be chosen the President of the nation. Such men as Drs. Thornwell, Palmer, Adger, Smyth and Moore, of the Presbyterian church; Bishops Polk, Elliott and Green, of the Episcopal church; and the leading men of the Methodist, Baptist, and other churches—exerted so mighty an

influence upon the southern people, from the pulpit, the press, and the stump, as to draw from one of their own statesmen the infamous compliment, "that the revolution was accomplished mainly by the churches; and that but for them it would have been a failure;" that the Confederacy was "the grand creation of the Southern Church"—"the creature of her prayers and labors." Repeatedly is it asserted that the Church led and controlled the politicians; and this fearful responsibility for the rebellion and its horrors, the ministry and church claimed; they gloried in it; and were so jealous of the honor as to refuse to divide it with the politicians; declaring that the conspiracy "was due, not to the tricks of the demagogue, nor to the eloquence of renowned orators, nor to the instructions of retired sages, but to the uprising of the ministry and the church." Be it so then, since they will have it; and let God reward them according to their works. To them were the southern people indebted for the grand idea that they were "set of God to conserve and perpetuate in the earth the institution of slavery." To them, too, are we indebted for all that horrible barbarity that starved our patriot soldiers by tens of thousands. The leading Christianity of the South lifted no voice against it; but gave it the sanction of silent acquiescence, or of open approval.

And to-day, how has the providence of God left these teachers of disloyalty and treason, and their churches, and the few sympathizing clergy who abandoned the loyal North, saying to these worshipers of slavery, "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God?" The heavy hand of judgment has fallen upon them. Some who took the sword have fallen by the sword.

Others are wandering mendicants. Some who fled southward in their love of treason, are fleeing northward in their want of bread. Their churches are desolated; their vested properties are utterly lost; their boards of missions, education, publication, are swept away; their church members are scattered like lost sheep; their whole country has become missionary ground, for a purer and truer gospel, to be supported by the churches of the North. The institution they were "ordained of God to conserve and perpetuate," has "died by visitation of God;" and they stand outside the sympathy of the Christian world, guilty of schism, guilty of treason, guilty of innocent bloodshedding; and will be permitted to re-enter the communion of the American churches, only when they acknowledge their errors, and repent of their sins. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

Look once again, how the deep-laid providence of God circumvents the haughty policy and the puny efforts of man. It is now too well known to admit of any doubt, that a part of the original scheme of the rebel leaders was to establish an aristocracy, if not a monarchy, in the southern portion of the Republic. They sought the perpetual degradation of the hard-toiling, laboring classes, by making wealthy capital the owner of working poverty. They sought to make labor dishonorable. They claimed for themselves the honor of rearing a nobler civilization, and of nursing a rare and true chivalry, like that of the old Paladins and Bayards. The slaveholder's relation to his bondmen

has for years been eulogized by themselves and their northern servitors, as something patriarchal, grand, religious; the voucher of a purer social state. In their school books, they taught their youth that southern society lacked only titles to make it the peer of the nobler classes of Europe. We know with what supercilious haughtiness they proclaimed this on the floor of the American Senate; with what contempt they treated our northern society; how insolently they acted in our northern cities and watering places; regarding themselves as an order of nobles, a privileged caste; how the virus of their influence penetrated every fibre of society at our national capital; and with what a truculent meanness men bowed and cringed to their arrogant pretensions. The essential spirit of the southern rebellion was manifested by one of themselves, when he said, "We, people of the South, will not submit to be governed by a man who has come up, as Abe Lincoln has, from the ranks of the common people." It was this spirit that gave them the sympathy of the aristocracies of the Old World. It was this that quickened the rejoicings of the down-trodden millions at their downfall. It was this that, in the opening years of war, inspired them with the fatal belief that the free North was inhabited by a race of cravens; of whom five would be a bare match for one of their bold sons. But mark now, how, in the avenging wisdom of God, this vaunted superiority in knightly valor, and honor, and refinement, and courtesy, has been left to fill up, before the loathing nations, the full measure of its shame. It was this chivalry that bullied free-speech for years, by the gleam of the bowie knife; that bludgeoned unresisting

Senators in the National Council Chamber; that inaugurated the bloodiest ruffianism in the new territories; and that, after the war opened, having been nourished for years on the streaming blood of the slave, famished and crazed its white prisoners, at Andersonville, Salisbury, and Belle Isle; that, at Fort Pillow, butchered its surrendered, disarmed and unresisting enemy, because of their dusky skin; that carved into finger-rings the bones of their foemen, fallen in battle; that undermined their famous prison, with the intent of hurling to instant death hundreds of innocent men: it was this chivalry that planned the burning of northern hotels, with their unarmed inmates, many of them helpless women and children; that employed agents to transport boxes of infected clothing into our large cities, to our National Capital, to the very house of our President; there to spread disease and death on the widest scale; and that, lastly, as a supplement of failure, by all other means, human and diabolical, inaugurated private assassination. All this was the work of that vaunting, elate, defiant chivalry, permitted of God its high broad stage of glorying, and its full tether of development; with the intent that it might earn its merited execration, and go down under a tempest of unanimous abhorrence. Let chivalry stand hereafter, in the dialect of loyal speech, as the synonym of all that is dishonorable, inglorious and mean. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

Again: when, one after another, the States of the South sought to withdraw from the Union, declared themselves to be no longer bound by the Constitution,

and no longer parts of the nation, they rested their action, so far as they deigned to account for it, on the ground that the United States were nothing more than a confederation, bound by a mere compact; which could be broken, whenever the interests or the whim of any party thereto so dictated. They asserted, that the American Republic was a league of friendship, for common defence, for the security of liberties, and the mutual welfare; not a nation: that it was a Confederacy; not a people: a congeries of States; not a Union: and that, as each State had come into it, of its own accord, it might sail out of it, at its own will. You will remember the cry of "no coercion," started by traitors, and re-echoed by northern friends, when the government began to use force, to bring the refractory to their duties. Under the power of a terrible lie, often repeated, that there was no organic bond between the States, we were dropping apart, as grains of sand in an hour-glass. Disintegration threatened us. Already visions of half a dozen jarring republics rose before us. Cities talked of seceding from States. The right to dissolve partnership, and break up the household, was bruited about on every side. The people awoke to the issue and the danger. They determined to decide the question in the crimson court of war. Pushing aside all these pernicious ideas, and all propositions for compromise that involved them, they took up arms, in defence of the integrity and sovereignty of the nation. They asserted that these United States are but another name for the American State. They went forth to a hundred battle-fields, saying, The solemn, authoritative voice of the nation shall be the supreme law of

the land; higher than the will of any part of the people, whether individuals or States. They fell by hundreds of thousands, saying, We are American citizens; the members of a developed, completed nationality; and our widest, highest rights are those which are supported by the power, and involved in the dignity, of the entire nation.

And now, how has the providence of God decided the great contest between the sovereignty of the whole, and the sovereignty of the part? It has been settled that the American Union is a vital, throbbing, indivisible organism, pervaded by one life. In the utter breaking up of the Confederacy—in the flight of governors and legislatures—in the complete remanding of all state governments into the hands of the general government—in that great work of reconstruction now going on, and which is intrusted only to men who acknowledge the supremacy of the nation over the state—do we hear the people of the country uttering anew the words of their fathers: "This Constitution, and the laws of the United States, made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties under the authority of the United States, *shall be the supreme law of the land;* anything in the constitution or laws of any State, to the contrary notwithstanding." Before these words, re-asserted in the roll of every loyal cannon, emphasized by every shout of the loyal victors, endorsed by the sign-manual of every drop of loyal blood, the fierce invective and boast of the Southern traitor, and the feeble sophistry of the Northern, die away. By the blood of martyred patriots, who have lain down in death beside their martyred generals and their martyred Head, the Union, the object of our deepest desire, is

cemented anew—to be "now and forever, one and inseparable." "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

Again: another of the chief ends for which the rebellion was inaugurated was the arrest and destruction of the spirit of liberty, and the security and perpetuation of human bondage. Yet at the very time they invoked the violence of war, everything favored them; lynch-law in Carolina, mob-law in New York. At their behest, anti-slavery meetings were broken up at the North. They had gags upon the lips of our statesmen, and chains around our court-houses. They muzzled our pulpits, they ruled our presses, they expurgated our publications, they rifled the government mails, they spoke through our supreme judiciary. Opening a single duel with the fanatical John Brown, they went on to merge it into a general war, whose grand issue should be the supremacy of slavery. God accepted the issue—not we. At the commencement of the struggle, there was a divine concealment of the real issue from the body of the people. We were not ripe for it, nor able to bear it. We only wished to contend for the Constitution, as it was. We asked no change. We were ready for compromises even. We declared, in our National Council, "that neither Congress, nor the people, nor the government of the non-slaveholding States, have a constitutional right to legislate upon, or to interfere with, slavery in any of the slaveholding States of the Union." We did not accept the thought that God was opening a line of providences, which would overturn the giant wrong of human bondage. But the

great issue rose before us, persistently lifted up by grand providences, which we could not control. Slowly our eyes gained clearness of perception. We saw men, as trees, walking. The nation cared but little for justice to the black man. We offered a compensated emancipation, as the price of peace; and were ready to pay it, at any conceivable price. The offer and the thought were madly rejected. Only after years of sacrifice and blood, did even that noblest and wisest man among us, who, last of all, was the nation's great sacrifice on the altar of liberty, reach a measure of willingness that the issue of slavery should be in the war at all. God—I speak it reverently—brought us to it. At length both North and South saw that it was the one grand question. They of the South would fight for slavery, as the corner-stone of their new empire, and as a divine institution. God permitted them to fight, until they were compelled to promise liberty to their slaves, if they would help them in the wasting conflict. Yea; and He also permitted the struggle to go on, with terrible defeats for us, with broken hopes and darkened homes, until, in the light of our increasing sacrifices, we should read the ineradicable barbarism of slavery; and vow, in just wrath, to make an utter end of a social system, that paused not to hack and stab at any right, or any life. He made the very champions of the institution, at the moment they deemed themselves to be its heroic avengers, his delegated expositors of its true hideousness, and the unconscious executioners of their own idol. "Just as the curse, invoked by the Jews on the head of the Crucified, came hurtling back in bloody rain on themselves and on their

children's children, through long centuries and across wide continents;" so the first shot fired at Sumter, in defence of slavery, has been flying back in swift, hard, terrible blows upon them, until they are glad to bury the cause of their war out of their sight. The slaughterers of right have been God's agents in slaughtering the giant wrong, which they had insanely clothed in the garments of a god. The man whom they most hated signed the death-warrant of American slavery. In a document, which was his last message, Abraham Lincoln had spoken of God's possible purpose to compensate each drop of blood, drawn by the driver's lash, by another drop of blood, streaming from the soldier's sword. A few days earlier, he had said, "If this country cannot be saved, without giving up the principle, that the weight shall be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all shall have an equal chance, I was about to say, *I would rather be assassinated on the spot than surrender it.*" Slavery set the clumsy seal of its own bloody endorsement to these heroic words, by dashing the blood of the utterer upon the face of his last message! And by that act of the assassin, slavery's last champion, "it effectually nailed to the mast of State, the banner of universal, unconditional, uncompensated and unrepealable emancipation." Shut thine accursed doors, oh slave marts, where humanity was bought and sold! Rot in the blistering sun, oh slave-ship; nor let a traitorous wind ever send thee again on thy mission of woe! Melt in the furnace, oh fetters of iron; and let thy molten flood pour forth into moulds of the plowshare and the pruning-hook. Sink, oh hated system, under the poison of thine own hate, shouting thine own

doom, till no monument of thy barbarism is left on the soil of our regenerated Republic. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

But the most remarkable providence of the war may be traced in the life, the character, and the death of that man, who was God's chief instrument in defeating treason, and saving the country. Let us touch the salient points of his history.

He was born of lowly, but respectable parentage, in Kentucky, February twelfth, eighteen hundred and nine. In eighteen hundred and sixteen, his parents removed to Indiana; and in his new home, the boy Abraham grew to be a young man. His advantages were very limited. He spent his youth in toil; and obtained, in the aggregate, but a single year's common-school education. At the age of twenty-one, he removed with his father to Illinois; and in the following year, was employed, as one of the hands, in navigating a flat-boat, down the Mississippi, to New Orleans. The following year, eighteen hundred and thirty-two, he served his country for three months, as the captain of a volunteer company, in the Blackhawk war. He then began the study of law; and two years later, at the early age of twenty-five years, he was elected to the legislature of his State, by a triumphant vote. In eighteen hundred and forty-six, at the age of thirty-seven, he was one of the acknowledged political leaders of the State, in opposition to the repeal of the Missouri compromise. In eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, occurred the famous contest between him and Judge Douglas, for the United States Senatorship; in which, though he lost the prize, he had

a majority of the popular vote. Two years later, he was nominated, elected and inaugurated as the sixteenth President of the United States. Little more than a month elapsed, when the grand conspiracy inaugurated civil war, by opening the fire of one hundred and forty guns upon Fort Sumter. Then slowly and heavily rolled on the four years of mingled woe and glory, that brought out the simple, massive and patient greatness of this foremost man of the age. And, as from our harbor of safety, we look back upon those perilous years, and behold the ship of State plunging wildly amid the surging seas, and grating heavily on foundering reefs, one man we see, walking the decks with a quiet intrepidity; his great heart ever true and trustful, his clear brain ever vigilant and comprehensive, his strong hand ever firm and untrembling; his brow calm, placid and hopeful, when all others were pale with fears. In November, eighteen hundred and sixty-four, the people by an almost unprecedented electoral majority, though amid storms of abuse and detraction, reinstated him in his high office. On the fourteenth of April, eighteen hundred and sixty-five, on the evening of that day, when, in token of the re-establishment of the national sovereignty, the national flag was re-uplifted on the ramparts of Sumter, he, the hope of the people, is smitten down, not by the hand of a lone assassin, but by the last foul blow of an expiring rebellion. Once again, as the news of the horrible deed sped athwart the land, covering their faces with paleness, men felt,

> "The day of the Lord is at hand, at hand!
> Its storms roll up the sky;"

And they asked, is the God of justice indifferent, that

He permits this butchery of so wise, so generous, so patriotic a ruler? But mark, how Providence rolls back the cloud, unvails his own designs, and furthers his own ends. The cry of the murderer, as he brandished the dagger, "so perish the tyrant evermore," was intended to be the verdict of mankind, and of history, against the murdered. It has become the verdict of mankind, of history, and of God, against the murderers, and against the tyrannical system that bred them. Perhaps the nation and the world needed this one most malign outbreak, and this one renowned sacrifice; that, in one foul deed, they might see the whole nature and disposition of slavery. It had long been working evil before our blinded eyes. It had destroyed public morality, and bred treachery in senates, and councils, and places of public trust. It had corrupted manhood, to its very centre. It had smitten the whole moral nature of its supporters with death. It had poisoned their domestic virtue, their patriotism and their religion. It wanted only this last, stealthy blow, and glut of an eminent victim, to set slavery, in its true nature, before a gazing and loathing universe. That blow was intended to send down the memory of Abraham Lincoln to the future, covered with disgrace. But mark again; how under the guiding hand of Providence, it has rounded the career of this immortal man into epic symmetry, and given him a crown of victory, that resembles the palm of religious martyrdom. It has a grace and fitness about it too, that one so good and grand as he, should go from duty done, to mingle with the fathers and founders of the republic, whose cherished plans he carried out, with pulse high, with strength full, and nerve strong; terminating

as noble life in a seemly manner. He died, with his armor on; in the heart of patriotic consultation; just returned from camp and council, and the presence of conquering legions. No slow fever dried his blood. No waste consumed him. He fell as his thousands had fallen on the field of battle, suddenly, and in the hour of victory. A man, from among the people; a man who would have wept and bled for the poorest drummer-boy of his great army—it was fitting, that in his death, he should be joined, in a common experience, with the hundreds, and the thousands, who without note, or name, suddenly fell for their country: that, as the nation, in all the future, thinks upon him, it may be of him, as one who, in the heavens, which are now his home, stands among the world's greatest, truest and best workers.

And Oh! what mourning has there been for him, as he suddenly went from the nation's burdens, and entrenched his place in its perpetual memory—wailing in hamlet and cottage, in the crowded city, and lonely wild; wailing among the dusky millions, who worshiped him as their Moses. The tears of a great people fall upon his bier. The nation rises to escort him to the place of the dead.

"He has gone, who seemed so great;
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own,
Being here; and we believe him
Something far advanced in state;
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him."

In the centre of the great continent, in the bosom of the West, from which he sprung, we have laid his

dust to rest. There, as in a vast cathedral, we have left all that is mortal of our beloved ruler; and the weeping nation says, Rest, great, tender, care-worn heart, and we will take care of thy fame; and to our children and our children's children, will rehearse the simple mighty words, the firm and gentle life of our second Washington.

Nor here alone has justice been done him, in the tears of his own people; but from across the oceans, from all the nations of Europe, from highest cabinets and lowliest homes, from the lovers of liberty everywhere, from the four quarters of the world, come the condolence and the sigh of the widest mourning the world has ever known. Thus did the Providence on high, by means of so tragic and foul a death, lift the name and memory of Abraham Lincoln to a loftier niche, shelving it apart from all predecessors, and from all successors; giving to an unknown, reproached and despised man, a confidence, and an homage, and a fame, never before so widely granted to one of his race. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice."

I have detained you too long over the thrilling lessons of this heroic time, and shall utter but one of the many more things that crowd upon me. The blow that struck our chief, was aimed, through him, at the life of the republic—at America. You and I, and all of us, were meant. It was hoped that the nation, suddenly deprived of its ruler, would, in its despair, reel and plunge and sink in hopeless anarchy. National life was struck at. Liberty was struck at. Government, human-

ity, here, everywhere, were struck at. It was a blow aimed at mankind. But the nation stands more solid than ever. The government is stronger than ever. The people are braver. Liberty is more hopeful and buoyant than ever. Republican institutions have not quivered at the blow. Without a break, or a jar, the government moves on. The nation gathers round the retiring leader's bier, drops its tears on his beloved face, lays him kindly and reverently down to rest, and then closes up, fast and firm, around his successor; with a new and a lofty purpose that the nation shall stand for the ages, as the monument of her martyred patriot, statesman, emancipator and friend.

And now, to what does God call us on this day of mourning? I say not to what does He call our government; for it, I believe, in its measure of public justice, is grandly executing the will of God. I leave the law, and the execution of justice, in the hands where God has placed them; satisfied justice will be done, and not overdone.

For us, for the loyal people of the land, there is a noble conquest; a conquest of light and love, of generosity and forgiveness, as we seek to imitate the high and patient temper of our late thoughtful and magnanimous chieftain. Let it be ours to build up the waste places of a conquered and helpless people; to upheave all roots of bitterness; to sow upon the track of desolation the seeds of liberty and Christian love; to let the common people know, that if they are disposed to come back into the old home, with the early love, we will meet them "a great way off." And as the blood of New England and of the West, of the Middle States

and the South, of mountain-side, ocean-side and prairie, has been sprinkled through the whole field of our warfare; and as the dead of the whole land lie side by side, in far-distant but fraternal cemeteries, giving a title to every State, in this precious planting of our strength, and our glory in it; let us, with one mind, one will, one heart, build up a nationality, where there shall be no North, no South, no East, no West: where there shall be known but one title—American: where there shall be but one temple for our common thanksgiving; and forever and for aye, but one loyal and fraternal impulse shall rule the hearts of all who have come out of our great tribulation. Along our stormy turbulences, God's great purposes have been throbbing. In our battle-blasted furrows, He has been sowing his righteous grain. Out of our days of pain, He has already brought us a large, calm peace.

"Beneath our brimming tears,
Lies nobler cause for singing,
Than ever in the shining years,
When all our vales were ringing
With happy sounds of mellow peace;
And all our cities thundered
With lusty echoes, and our seas,
By freighted keels were sundered.

For lo! the branding flails that drave
Our husks of foul self from us,
Show all the watching heavens, we have
Immortal grain of promise.
And lo! the dreadful blast that blew,
In gusts of fire amid us,
Have scorched and winnowed, from the true,
The falseness that undid us.

Wherefore, O ransomed people, shout;
O, banners, wave in glory!
O bugles, blow the triumph out!
O drums, strike up the story!

Clang broken fetters, idle swords!
Clap hands, O States, together!
And let all praises be the Lord's—
Our Saviour and our Father."

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. AMEN.